

ON CHRISTMAS NIGHT

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2023 | 7:00PM Corpus Christi Parish | Sandwich MA

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2023 | 7:00PM Church of the Redeemer | Chestnut Hill MA

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2023 | 7:00PM St. Paul's Episcopal Church | Newburyport MA

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2023 | 4:00PM Bedford Presbyterian Church | Bedford NY

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2023 | 7:00PM Stowe Community Church | Stowe VT Presented by Stowe Performing Arts

SKYLARK

A HISTORY OF LESSONS & CAROLS

The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols at King's College Carols service is a true beacon for choral music worldwide. First held in 1918, it has been a fixture of every Christmas Eve in Cambridge over the last century. The service was first heard live on the radio via the BBC in 1928. With the exception of 1930, it has been broadcast annually, even during the Second World War, when (according to the official history of the service) "the ancient glass (and also all heat) had been removed from the Chapel and the name of King's could not be broadcast for security reasons."

I knew I wanted to create a Christmas concert to reflect these over 100 years of choral tradition. A challenge was determining exactly how to do so. Being an American choir without chorister boy sopranos, I knew it would be impractical for us to try to evoke a similar sound to the Choir of King's College. We also do not have the benefit of a centuries-old reverberant acoustic (or an enormous organ to play along with accompanied pieces or hymns); there is certainly something special about a room completed during the reign of Henry VIII that we cannot capture! Further, we are a secular organization. Given that the defining feature of the Carols service is that it is a liturgical service with a progression of nine scriptural passages, translating this into a concert experience creates a significant shift in context.

Given those challenges, I had to consider what could we as Skylark bring to a program like this? Perhaps it would just be better for us all to tune in to BBC Radio 4 on Christmas Eve and leave all of this to Daniel Hyde and his current class of young choristers and undergraduate choral scholars.

As I tried to step away from these insecurities, what struck me is that this service has been very nearly a constant throughout a century of world history. When Eric Milner-White first assembled the service in 1918, he had just completed a tour of duty as an Army Chaplain in the First World War.

He mapped out what was then quite an unorthodox service of nine lessons drawn from scripture, because he felt that the Church of England needed "more imaginative worship." He revised the service only slightly in 1919, and every year since the structure has remained largely unchanged.

Comparing many aspects of our world today to that of 1918 would be a comical exercise in contrast. I daresay that if through a miracle of time travel, thirty-four-year-old Eric Milner-White were able to walk into this room today, he would be flabbergasted by the simple things that we take for granted, starting with the magical device in your pocket that allows you to type in his name and instantly read his biography. However, I also think he might be flabbergasted that another search on that magical device would show that the 'unorthodox' little Christmas service he cobbled together at the end of World War I has endured for one hundred years with nearly no change at all, and has inspired countless other similar services worldwide.

I don't know exactly how many people have heard one of the services broadcast over the last century (or more broadly, attended a service based on the original) but some rough math tells me it is in the hundreds of millions, if not billions. Amidst wars, political revolutions, social movements, and technological

change that has changed the face of society, a simple service on Christmas Eve has always begun with the hymn *Once in Royal David's City*.

This incredible continuity is what I hope we can become a part of tonight – I believe that sharing music from this service that has been sung, heard, and broadcast over the years can connect us with the stories of many people who have come before us. I actually think of this program as a different type of time machine, and one that is perhaps just as miraculous – in the moment in which we sing these pieces tonight, it connects us all to past performances and broadcasts through a direct musical link, in the same way that everyone who has stood in front of the Mona Lisa has a connection to each other (and indeed, a direct link to Leonardo da Vinci).

With that lens of historical connection in mind, creating this program became much easier. The concert is structured in the same fashion as the King's Carols Service, with a prelude (including a procession) and nine major sections, based on the nine scriptural passages that are read in the service. I chose some carols, like Robert Pearsall's timeless setting of *In Dulci Jubilo*, because they have been important recurring pieces of the service over the decades. I chose other pieces because I knew that they were sung in meaningful years in world history; for example, Herbert Howells' setting of *A Spotless Rose* was a part of the service in both 1929 and 2001. We have provided brief notes on each section to highlight some of these connections.

Some may be interested to lean how we came to discover some of the historical connections in the program. In beginning my research, I was surprised to discover that there is no complete record online of all of the music sung in the King's Carols Service over the last century. Correspondence with the music office at King's revealed that there is no digital database there either. American conductor Ray Robinson studied in England in the 1980s, and wrote an an excellent and informative article in the Choral Journal in 1990, which was quite helpful as a jumping off point for me. The college archivist at King's then granted permission for a representative of Skylark to peruse the historical orders of service there. A colleague and friend in the UK helped us achieve this, and that completed the picture.

I struggled with one particular programmatic choice, which was whether or not to have the scriptural lessons read aloud by singers or other community members. The lessons are printed in the program, as I think they provide some valuable historical and narrative context for the scriptural progression traced by the carols. However, we decided not to read the lessons aloud. In addition to lengthening the concert this evening, I think that to include them would also transform the evening into a church service. Although I imagine there are some among the Skylark singers and audience members who who not feel excluded by this choice, others might. At its core, we aim for this concert to be a beautiful musical and historical tapestry, rather than a liturgical event. A 'traditional' part of me will certainly miss hearing the lessons interwoven with the music sung by our Skylarks today, but I daresay that this part of me can still tune in to BBC Radio 4 on the 24th. In fact, I am fairly certain that I will.

- Matthew Guard, Artistic Director

ON CHRISTMAS NIGHT

PROCESSION & INVITATORY CAROL

Up! Good Christen Folk, and Listen[†]

Once in Royal David's City[†]
Solo: Sarah Moyer

In The Bleak Midwinter[†]

Solo: Janet Stone & Nathan Hodgson

Arr. G. R. Woodward (1848-1934)

H. J. Gauntlett (1805-1876) & A. H. Mann (1850-1929), Arr. David Willcocks & Matthew Guard

> Harold Darke (1888-1976) Arr. Matthew Guard

NINE LESSONS & CAROLS

I. Adam Lay y Bounden[†]

Boris Ord (1897-1961)

II. Tomorrow Shall be My Dancing Day[†]
Solo: Matthew Goinz

Arr. David Willcocks (1919-2015)

III. In Dulci Jubilo

Arr. Robert Pearsall (1795-1856)

IV. Es ist ein Ros entsprungen[†]

A Spotless Rose[†]

Solo: Matthew Goinz

3010. Matthew Golliz

V. **Hymne à la Vierge** **
Solo: Sarah Moyer

Bogoróditse Dyévo[†]

VI. Nesciens Mater*

Away in a Manger*

VII. Quelle est cette odeur agréable?[†]
Solo: Nathan Hodgson
Benedicamus Domino[†]

VIII. The Three Kings[†]
Solo: Nathan Halbur
The Shepherd's Carol[†]

IX. The First Nowell[†]
Solo: Stephan Griffin

Michael Praetorius (1571-1621) & Jan Sandström (b.1954) Herbert Howells (1892-1983)

Pierre Villette (1926-1998

Arvo Pärt (b. 1935)

Jean Mouton (c.1459-1522) Arr. Reginald Jacques (1894-1969)

Arr. David Willcocks & Matthew Guard

Peter Warlock (1894-1930)

Peter Cornelius (1824-1874) Arr. Ivor Atkins (1869-1953) Bob Chilcott (b. 1955)

Arr. David Willcocks & Matthew Guard

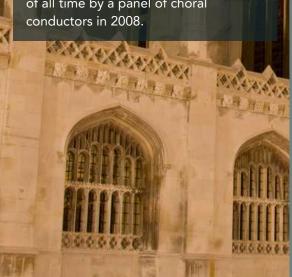
†Recorded on A Century of Carols
*Recorded on Winter's Night

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

Every King's College Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols service since 1919 has begun with the voice of a single chorister, beginning the processional hymn Once in Royal David's City. However, in the first service in 1918, the choir preceded the hymn with Charles Woodward's brief invitatory carol Up! Good Christen Folk, and Listen. We restore this original order tonight, offering Woodward's cheerful carol as a prelude.

Our rendering of *Once in Royal David's City* also begins with a single voice, and incorporates the harmonization by A. H. Mann, the choirmaster at King's at the time of the first service. The final verse is inspired by the organ arrangement and descant by Sir David Willcocks, choirmaster of King's from 1957 to 1974.

We conclude this section with an a cappella arrangement of Harold Darke's setting of *In The Bleak Midwinter*. Darke served as interim choirmaster at King's during the Second World War, and his simple and beautiful setting of this Christmas text was sung in the first carols service after the end of the war in 1945. In the decades since, it has become a near constant fixture in the service, and was even voted as the best Christmas carol of all time by a panel of choral conductors in 2008.



Up! Good Christen Folk, and Listen

Tune from Piae Cantiones, 1582 Arr. G. R. Woodward (1848-1934)

Ding-dong, ding: Ding-a-dong-ding.

Up! good Christen folk, and listen How the merry church bells ring, And from steeple bid good people Come adore the new-born King:

Tell the story how from glory God came down at Christmastide, Bringing gladness, chasing sadness, Show'ring blessings far and wide,

Born of mother, blest o'er other Ex Maria Virgine, [Of the Virgin Mary] In a stable ('tis no fable), Christus natus hodie. [Christ is born today]

Once in Royal David's City

H. J. Gauntlett (1805-1876) & A. H. Mann (1850-1929)

Once in royal David's city, Stood a lowly cattle shed, Where a mother laid her Baby, In a manger for His bed: Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ, her little Child.

He came down to earth from heaven, Who is God and Lord of all, And His shelter was a stable, And His cradle was a stall: With the poor, and mean, and lowly, Lived on earth our Saviour holy

For He is our childhood's pattern; Day by day, like us He grew; He was little, weak and helpless, Tears and smiles like us He knew; And He feeleth for our sadness, And He shareth in our gladness.

And our eyes at last shall see Him, Through His own redeeming love; For that Child so dear and gentle Is our Lord in heav'n above, And He leads His children on To the place where He is gone.

Not in that poor lowly stable, With the oxen standing by, We shall see Him; but in heaven, Set at God's right hand on high; Where like stars His children crowned All in white shall wait around.

In the Bleak Midwinter

Harold Darke (1888-1976)

In the bleak midwinter Frosty wind made moan, Earth stood hard as iron, Water like a stone. Snow had fallen Snow on snow, In the bleak midwinter Long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold Him, Nor earth sustain Heaven and earth shall flee away When He comes to reign In the bleak midwinter, A stable place suffic'd The Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

Enough for Him, whom Cherubim Worship night and day A breast full of milk And a manger full of hay. Enough for Him, whom Angels Fall down before, The ox and ass and camel Which adore.

What can I give Him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd
I would bring a lamb,
If I were a wise man
I would do my part,
Yet what I can I give Him —
Give my heart.

FIRST LESSON

God tells sinful Adam that he has lost the life of Paradise and that his seed will bruise the serpent's head. (Genesis 3)

And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

Adam Lay y Bounden

Boris Ord (1897-1961)

Adam lay y bounden, Bounden in a bond; Four thousand winter, Thought he not too long.

And all was for an apple, An apple that he took. As clerkes finden, Written in their book. Ne had the apple taken been, The apple taken been, Ne had never our ladie, Abeen heav'ne queen.

Blessed be the time That apple taken was, Therefore we moun singen. Deo gratias! [Thanks be to God]

SECOND LESSON

God promises to faithful Abraham that in his seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. (Genesis 22)

And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day

English Traditional Carol Arr. David Willcocks (1919-2015)

Tomorrow shall be my dancing day, I would my true love did so chance To see the legend of my play, To call my true love to my dance.

Sing O my love, my love, This have I done for my true love. Then was I born of a Virgin pure, Of her I took fleshly substance; Thus was I knit to man's nature, To call my true love to my dance. Sing O my love...

In a manger laid and wrapp'd I was, So very poor this was my chance, Betwixt an ox and a silly poor ass, To call my true love to my dance. Sing O my love... Boris Ord served as the organist and choirmaster at King's College from 1929 to 1957, with a brief absence to serve in the Royal Air Force during World War II. Although he served at King's for nearly three decades, his setting of Adam Lay y Bounden was his only published piece of music. However, it has been performed after the first lesson of the service more than any other carol, appearing more than forty times, including in 1963, just five weeks after the Kennedy assassination.

The second lesson has traditionally been followed by a short and lively carol in a quick tempo, such as our offering today of the David Willcocks setting of Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day. Although the words of this Carol are from a traditional Cornish poem, they have their origins in medieval 'mystery plays', which portrayed biblical stories as tableaux with an accompanying antiphonal song. The unique text of the Carol narrates portions of the life of Christ in the first person, characterizing his life as a dance, a device that would later be used in the modern hymn Lord of the

Missing 11 street

Other than congregational hymns like Once in Royal David's City, In Dulci Jubilo may be the most frequently sung piece of music in the King's College service. It was sung in the first service in 1918 and has appeared in most years since then, including 1969 (months after the first moon landing) and 1989 (shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall).



The carol Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming has often been paired with the fourth lesson in the King's College service, as the text of the Carol has its origins in the same biblical passage from the book of Isaiah. Today we share two versions of this beloved carol.

Jan Sandström's ethereal setting of Es ist ein Ros entsprungen incorporates the original harmonization by Michael Praetorius. However, by dividing the choir into two groups that explore the harmony of the hymn at different speeds, Sandström creates a dreamlike texture that seems to stretch time and space.

Herbert Howells' poignant setting of A Spotless Rose (a poetic English translation of Es ist ein Ros) has been heard dozens of times from King's on Christmas Eve. Some of us recall hearing it in December 2001, just a few months after the terrorist attacks of 9/11.

THIRD LESSON

The prophet foretells the coming of the Saviour. (Isaiah 9)

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

In dulci jubilo

Traditional German Tune Arr. Robert Pearsall (1795-1856)

In dulci jubilo [In quiet joy]
Let us our homage show
Our heart's joy reclineth
In praesepio [in a manger]
And like a bright star shineth
Matris in gremio [in the mother's lap]
Alpha es et O. [Thou art Alpha and Omega]

O Jesu parvule [O tiny Jesus]
I yearn for thee alway
Hear me, I beseech thee
O Puer optime! [O best of boys]
My prayer let it reach thee
O Princeps gloriae! [O Prince of glory]
Trahe me post te. [draw me unto thee]

O patris caritas [O love of the Father]
O nati lenitas [O gentleness of the Son]
Deep were we stained
Per nostra crimina [through our sins]
But thou hast for us gained
Coelorum gaudia [the joy of heaven]
O that we were there.

Ubi sunt gaudia, [where are joys] If that they be not there?
There are angels singing
Nova cantica [new songs]
There the bells are ringing
In regis curia [in the king's court]
O that we were there.

FOURTH LESSON

The peace that Christ will bring is foreshown. (Isaiah 11)

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots: and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord. With righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

Est ist ein Ros entsprungen

Jan Sandström (b.1954)

Es ist ein Ros entsprungen, aus einer Wurzel zart, wie uns die Alten sungen, von Jesse kam die Art Und hat ein Blümlein bracht mitten im kalten Winter, wohl zu der halben Nacht... Lo, how a rose e'er blooming, From tender stem hath sprung. Of Jesse's lineage coming, As men of old have sung; It came, a flow'ret bright, Amid the cold of winter, When half spent was the night

A Spotless Rose

Herbert Howells (1892-1983)

A spotless Rose is blowing, sprung from a tender root, of ancient seers' foreshowing, of Jesse promis'd fruit. Its fairest bud unfolds to light amid the cold, cold winter, And in the dark midnight.

The Rose which I am singing, whereof Isaiah said, Is from its sweet root springing in Mary, purest Maid.
For through our God's great love and might, The Blessed Babe she bare us in a cold, cold winter's night.

FIFTH LESSON

The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary. (St. Luke 1)

And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

Hymne à la Vierge

Pierre Villette (1926-1998)

O toute belle, Vierge Marie, Votre âme trouve en Dieu le parfait amour; Il vous revêt du manteau de la Grâce Comme une fiancée parée de ses joyaux. Alleluia.

Je vais chanter ta louange, Seigneur, Car tu as pris soin de moi, Car to m'as envelopée du voile de l'innocence.

Vous êtes née avant les collines, O sagesse de Dieu, Porte du Salut, Heureaux celui qui marche dans vos traces Qui apprête son coeur A la voix de vos conseils. Alleluia.

Je vais chanter ta louange, Seigneur, Car tu m'as faite, avant le jour, Car tu m'as fait précéder Le jaillissement des sources.

Avant les astres vois étiez présente, Mère du Créateur, Au profound du ciel; Quand Dieu fixait les limites du monde Vous partagiez son coeur Etant à l'oeuvre avec lui. Alleluia.

O toute belle Vierge Marie.

Bogoróditse Djévo

Arvo Pärt (b. 1935)

Bogoróditse Djévo, rádujssja, Blagodátnaja Maríje, Gosspód ss Tobóju: blagosslovjéna Ty v zhenákh, i blagosslovjén plod chrjéva Tvojegó, jáko Sspássa rodilá jeessí dush náshikh. O fairest Virgin Mary, Your soul finds in the Lord perfect love; He clothes you in robes of grace Like a bride attired with jewels. Alleluia.

I will sing thy praise, O Lord, For thou has looked after me, And covered me with the veil of innocence.

You were born before the hills, O wisdom of the Lord, Gate of Redemption, Blessed is he who walks in your steps, Who tunes his heart To the counsels of your voice. Alleluia.

I will sing thy praise, O Lord, For thou has made me, before dawn, For thou has made me precede The gushing forth of springs.

Before the stars you were there, Mother of the Creator, In the highest heaven; When God was setting the limits of the world You shared his love As you labored with him. Alleluia.

O fairest Virgin Mary.

Rejoice, full of grace,
O virgin Mary, the Lord is with thee:
blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb,
for thou hast borne the Saviour of our souls.

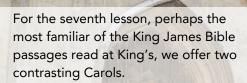
Skylark tenor Robbie Jacobs was a choral scholar at King's College Cambridge, and had the joy of taking part in the annual Christmas Eve broadcasts during his time at University. I asked Robbie for a few of the favorite pieces he sang at Christmas at King's – he suggested the first piece in this set, the beautiful Hymne à la Vierge by French composer Pierre Villette.

In 1983, King's College organist and choirmaster Stephen Cleobury began a tradition of commissioning a new carol for the service each year. Seven years later, he commissioned Estonian composer Arvo Pärt to create a new carol for the 1990 King's College service. The result is Pärt's joyful and jubilant setting of Bogoróditse Dyévo, the 'Ave Maria' of the Orthodox Christian tradition.



For the sixth lesson, we offer one of the most remarkable compositions of the Renaissance period, the stunning Nesciens Mater of Jean Mouton. Aside from being inexplicably gorgeous, this piece is a unique work of compositional genius. The choir is divided into two groups of four voices each. However, only one set of four voice parts was notated in the score; the second group was instructed to sing the same exact musical material four beats later, transposed up a perfect fifth. This "hidden" second choir overlays and interacts with the first choir in truly sublime ways, and animates a living musical allegory of the virgin birth.

After this ornate compositional tour de force, we offer a carol on a familiar text ("Away in a Manger"), but set to a simple Normandy folk tune. To me, this setting gives the words a much more profound musical pairing than the tune we often see in American hymn books.



Quelle est cette odeur agréable? is a lyrical French folksong with lush harmony from former King's College Choirmaster David Willcocks.



SIXTH LESSON

St. Luke tells of the birth of Jesus. (St. Luke 2)

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

Nesciens mater

Jean Mouton (c.1459-1522)

Nesciens mater virgo virum peperit sine dolore salvatorem saeculorum. Ipsum regem angelorum sola virgo lactabat, ubere de caelo pleno. Knowing no man, the Virgin mother bore, without pain, the Saviour of the world. Him, the king of angels, only the Virgin suckled, breasts filled by heaven.

Away in a Manger

Traditional Normandy Tune Arr. Reginald Jacques (1894-1969)

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed, the little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head; the stars in the heavens looked down where He lay, the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the Baby awakes, but little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes. I love Thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky and stay by my side until morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay close by me forever, and love me, I pray. Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care, and fit us for heaven, to live with Thee there.

SEVENTH LESSON

The shepherds go to the manger. (St. Luke 2)

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

Quelle est cette odeur agréable?

Traditional French Carol Arr. David Willcocks (1919-2015)

Quelle est cette odeur agréable, Bergers, qui ravit tous nos sens ? S'exhale-t-il rien de semblable Au milieu des fleurs du printemps ? Quelle est cette odeur agréable Bergers, qui ravit tous nos sens ? Where is that goodly fragrance flowing to steal the senses all away? adorns the air, and nothing like it the shepherds sensed in fields in May? Where is that goodly fragrance flowing to steal the senses all away?

A Bethléem, dans une crèche Il vient de vous naitre un Sauveur Allons, que rien ne vous empêche D'adorer votre rédempteur A Bethléem, dans une crèche, Il vient de vous naître un Sauveur.

Dieu tout puissant, gloire éternelle Vous soit rendue jusqu'aux cieux. Que la paix soit universelle Que la grâce a bonde en tous lieux. Dieu tout puissant, gloire éternelle Vous soit rendue jusqu'aux cieux. Shepherds to Bethlehem, go hasten! And in a manger see him lay. Adore your God and your redeemer; Saviour of all to win the day Shepherds to Bethlehem, go hasten! And in a manger see him lay.

All pow'rful God, and King eternal, The heavens praise with one accord. Grace, peace anf truth give to all nations Spring forth from Jesus Christ our Lord. All pow'rful God, and King eternal, The heavens praise with one accord.

Benedicamus Domino

Peter Warlock (1894-1930)

Procedenti puero, Eya, nobis annus est!
Virginis ex utero. Gloria! Laudes!
Deus homo factus est et immortalis.
Sine viri semine Eya, nobis annus est!
Natus est de virgine. Gloria! Laudes!
Deus homo factus est et immortalis.
Sine viri copia, Eya, nobis annus est!
Natus est ex Maria. Gloria! Laudes!
Deus homo factus est et immortalis.
In hoc festo determino, Eya, nobis annus est!
Benedicamus Domino! Gloria! Laudes!
Deus homo factus est et immortalis.

A boy comes forth, Eya, this is our time! From the womb of a virgin. Glory! Praise! God is made man and immortal. Without the seed of a man Eya, this is our time, He is born of a virgin. Glory! Praise! God is made man and immortal. Without the means of a man, Eya, this is our time, He is born of Mary. Glory! Praise! God is made man and immortal. On this appointed feast, Eya, this is our time, Let us bless the Lord. Glory! Praise! God is made man and immortal.

EIGHTH LESSON

The wise men are led by the star to Jesus. (St. Matthew 2)

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judæa: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel. Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. When they had heard the king, they departed; and lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts, gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way

The Three Kings

Peter Cornelius (1824-1874) Arr. Ivor Atkins (1869-1953)

(Soloist)

Three kings from Persian lands afar
To Jordan follow the pointing star:
And this the quest of the travellers three,
Where the new-born King of the Jews may be.
Full royal gifts they bear for the King;
Gold, incense, myrrh are their offering.
The star shines out with a steadfast ray;
The kings to Bethlehem make their way,
And there in worship they bend the knee,
As Mary's child in her lap they see;
Their royal gifts they show to the King;
Gold, incense, myrrh are their offering.
Thou child of man, lo, to Bethlehem
The kings are travelling, travel with them!

The star of mercy, the star of grace, Shall lead thy heart to its resting-place. Gold, incense, myrrh thou canst not bring; Offer thy heart to the infant King.

(Choir)
How brightly shines the morning star!
With grace and truth from heaven afar
Our Jesse tree now bloweth.
Of Jacob's stem and David's line,
For thee, my Bridegroom, King divine,
My soul with love o'erfloweth.
Thy word, Jesu, Inly feeds us,
Rightly leads us, Life bestowing.
Praise, O praise, such love o'erflowing.



The rousing Benedicamus Domino by Peter Warlock is a brief but festive hymn celebrating the birth of Christ.

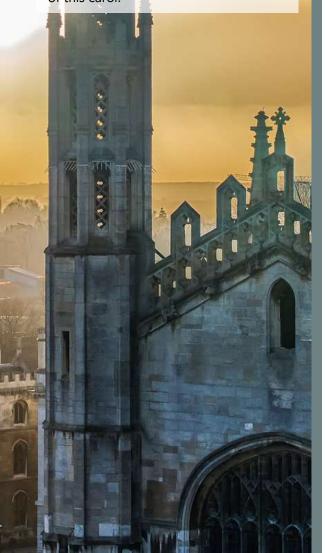


One carol has been sung more than any other at King's College to tell the story of the wise men: Peter Cornelius's setting of *The Three Kings*, arranged by Ivor Atkins. The compositional device is simple and yet astoundingly effective—the choir performs a popular Bach chorale to represent the star in the east ('How brightly shines the morning star"), while a baritone solo sings a winding melody representing the path of the magi to the manger. This beautiful setting was sung at King's against the backdrop of a developing World War in December 1939.



Bob Chilcott's *Shepherd's Carol* is a modern and yet unapologetically beautiful carol commissioned for the King's College service for the turning of the millennium in the year 2000.

In every King's College service since 1919, O Come All Ye Faithful has followed the ninth lesson. However, in the original service of 1918, The First Nowell was sung in this slot. I chose to end our concert as in the original service, partly because I do not think we can possibly do Adeste Fideles justice without an organ to play the stunning David Willcocks arrangement. As a different homage to Sir David, we base our a cappella arrangement of The First Nowell on his harmonization of this carol.



The Shepherd's Carol

Bob Chilcott (b. 1955)

We stood on the hills, Lady, our day's work done, Watching the frosted meadows that winter had won. The evening was calm, Lady, the air so still, Silence more lovely than music folded the hill. There was a star, Lady, shone in the night, Larger than Venus it was and bright, so bright. Oh, a voice from the sky, Lady, it seemed to us then Telling of God being born in the world of men. And so we have come, Lady, our day's work done, Our love, our hopes, ourselves, we give to your son.

NINTH LESSON

St. John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation. (St. John 1)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light. That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

The First Nowell

Traditional English Carol Arr. David Willcocks

The First Nowell, the Angel did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep
On a cold winter's night that was so deep
Nowell, Born is the King of Israel.

They looked up and saw a star Shining in the East beyond them far And to the earth it gave great light And so it continued both day and night Nowell, Born is the King of Israel.

And by the light of that same star Three wise men came from country far; To seek for a king was their intent, And to follow the star wherever it went. Nowell, Born is the King of Israel.

This star drew nigh to the northwest, O'er Bethlehem it took its rest, And there it did both stop and stay Right over the place where Jesus lay. Nowell, Born is the King of Israel.

Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heavenly Lord;
That hath made heaven and earth of naught,
And with his blood mankind hath bought
Nowell, Born is the King of Israel.

About the Artists



Three-time GRAMMY®-nominee Skylark, "the cream of the American crop" (BBC Radio 3), is a premier chamber choir comprised of leading American vocal soloists, chamber musicians, and music educators. Skylark's dramatic performances have been described as "gripping" (The Times of London), "exquisite...thrilling" (Gramophone Magazine), and "aweinspiring" (Boston Music Intelligencer). Skylark's mission is to be the most exciting and innovative vocal ensemble for audiences and artists alike, and to provide inspiring educational activities that positively impact students' lives. Skylark sets the standard for innovative and engaging programs that re-define the choral experience for audiences and singers alike – three of its most recent albums have received GRAMMY® nominations, and Artistic Director Matthew Guard's well-researched and creative programs have been described as "engrossing" (WQXR-NY) and "original, stimulating, and beautiful" (BBC Radio 3).



Matthew Guard, Artistic Director

Three-time GRAMMY®-nominee MATTHEW GUARD is widely regarded as one of the most innovative and thoughtful programmers in American choral music. Praised for his "catalyzing leadership" (Q2/WQXR-NY) and "musically creative and intellectually rich" programming (Opera Obsession), Matthew is passionate about communicating something unique in each concert and recording. He scours the world of available repertoire for each program, exhaustively researches each piece, and crafts concerts and printed programs that captivate audiences with their hidden connections and seamless artistry. Matthew lives in Bedford, NY, with his wife Carolyn and sons Harry and Arthur.

Staff

Matthew Guard, *Artistic Director* Carolyn Guard, *Executive Director*

Sarah Moyer, Ensemble Manager Janet Stone, Operations & Marketing

Acknowledgements



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- @ @skylarkensemble



Sophie Amelkin's recent selected stage appearances include *The Office: A Musical Parody* Off-Broadway, her Carnegie Hall Solo Debut in Mozart's *Coronation Mass*, and an international arena tour singing with a GRAMMY® winning rock band. NYC Musical Readings: *The Pretty Pants Bandit, Here I Am.* Regional Theater: *The Buddy Holly Story.* Appearances: Diana in *My Princess Diana*, recitals of Ladino and Yiddish art song, Despina (*Così fan tutte*), St. Teresa of Avila (*Four Saints in Three Acts*), Bianca (*La Rondine*), and Susanna (*Le nozze di Figaro*). When not singing, Sophie is exploring the city of New York with her beautiful beagle Lucy and her amazing partner Matt. www.sophieamelkin.com

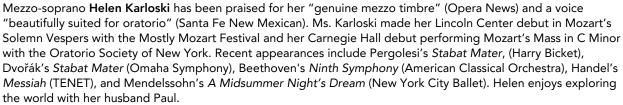
Soprano Sarah Moyer's recent and upcoming solo work includes performances with the Colorado Bach Ensemble, Aspen Chamber Symphony, Bourbon Baroque, Lost Dog New Music Ensemble, Emmanuel Music, and Boston Modern Orchestra Project, with American premieres by Melani and Nørgård, and world premieres by Harbison, Kallembach, Theofanidis, and Runestad, among others. She regularly appears with GRAMMY® nominated groups Skylark, Seraphic Fire, Conspirare, Clarion, True Concord, as well as Santa Fe Desert Chorale, Variant 6, and Artefact. She loves being a mom, plays the ukulele, races triathlons, and enjoys hiking with her husband and their beautiful catahoula leopard. www.sopranosarahmoyer.com

Soprano Janet Stone's first musical exploration was at age four, when she would sing "Row, row, row your boat" repetitively, at increasingly higher keys, to her parents' chagrin. She gained much of her musical education at Grace Episcopal Church in Madison, Wisconsin before earning her degree at Coe College. Janet sings with multiple professional ensembles, including Ensemble Altera, Boston Camerata, Cappella Clausura, and Zenith Ensemble. Solo highlights include Bach's St John Passion – where she was praised for her "sparking voice" (Boston Musical Intelligencer). In her free time, Janet is training to be a professional cat lady. You can follow her feline friend on Instagram @obiewancatnobi. www.janetstonesoprano.com

Julia Soojin Cavallaro, mezzo-soprano, is a professional choral artist and oratorio soloist based in Boston. Praised by New York Classical Review for her "warm mezzo, perfect diction, and easy phrasing," she sings with the Choir of the Church of the Advent, Ensemble Altera, Handel and Haydn Society, Upper Valley Baroque, and GRAMMY-nominated groups Skylark Vocal Ensemble and True Concord Voices & Orchestra. Recent oratorio solos include Bach's St. John Passion, Handel's Messiah, and Vivaldi's Gloria. Julia lives in Cambridge with her husband, Dan, and two cats, Bun and Gin. She enjoys reading graphic novels, watching films, and playing board games.



Mezzo-soprano Carolyn Guard is a founding member of Skylark. A life-long Episcopal church musician, she began her musical studies with the Royal School of Church Music at age 6. After attending the Eton Choral courses in the UK, Carolyn was a founding member of the Choral Fellow program in the Memorial Church at Harvard University, and was a staff singer at The Cathedral of St. Philip in Atlanta. Carolyn's decidedly non-musical degrees are from Harvard College and Emory University. When not singing or working on Babiators, you'll find her at home with her four boys (Matthew, Harry, Arthur and Baxter the dog).



John K. Cox is Visiting Professor of Music at Lewis & Clark College, where he directs two choirs and teaches courses in music theory and history. A specialist in Renaissance and Baroque performance practice and advocate for forgotten repertories, Dr. Cox's recent scholarship focuses on Italian sacred music from the late-seventeenth century. In its 2024-25 season, Portland Baroque Orchestra will give the modern debut of five of his editions, written for performance in Roman convents during the Anno Santo of 1675. He has presented research at meetings of the International Musicological Society, North American Renaissance Society, Society for 17th Century Music, and International Conference in Historic Performance.

Paul D'Arcy is in demand nationally as a soloist and chamber musician. Recent solo appearances include Handel's Messiah and Mozart's Requiem with the Austin Symphony, as well as Mendelssohn's Elijah, Bach's Christmas Oratorio, and Mozart Requiem Undead. Concert work in NYC includes Musica Sacra, St. John the Divine, Trinity Wall Street, Musica Viva, American Classical Orchestra, and Orchestra of St. Luke's. National ensembles include Seraphic Fire, San Diego Bach Collegium, True Concord, Ensemble Origo, and Spire. Discography includes Harmonia Mundi, Reference, Naxos, and PBS, including Conspirare's 2015 Grammy winning CD. Paul also enjoys making barrel-aged cocktails, cooking, and traveling.

Nathan Hodgson is a New York based tenor specializing in early music, chamber music, and choral singing. He sings with the Schola Cantorum at The Church of Saint Vincent Ferrer in New York City and performs with ensembles across the nation. A native of DFW, Nathan studied at the University of North Texas and, after receiving a Bachelor of Music in Music Education, sang regularly in the Dallas area with ensembles including the Orpheus Chamber Singers, Dallas Bach Society, and Denton Bach Society before moving to New York City in 2015. Nathan's extramusical pursuits include baking, hiking, and kickboxing.





Musician and educator **Matthew Goinz** has performed in venues around the world, created arrangements that have been heard from California to South Korea, and enjoyed collaborations with prominent artists of our day. He maintains performance relationships with a number of GRAMMY®-recognized ensembles and received his doctorate in conducting from the University of Maryland. Matthew works as a music director, pianist, vocalist, and arranger in the New York City area. He makes his home in Astoria with his wife, soprano and actor Sophie Amelkin, and Lucy, the sweetest beagle that ever was, and fancies himself a pretty good cook. mt-tracks.com | matthewgoinz.com

Stephan Griffin is a versatile artist with degrees in vocal and organ performance from Boston University and The University of Texas at Austin. Commended for his "warm tone" (EMA & Washington Post), Stephan has performed with ensembles including Ensemble Altera, Texas Early Music Project, and Long & Away. Recent and upcoming engagements include Bach's *St. John Passion* with Providence Baroque Orchestra, Masary Studios and Kitty Brazelton's *Recursion and Release*, and the premiere of Trevor Weston's *Lauda* with The Seraphim Singers. Stephan is also the Director of Music at All Saints Episcopal Church (Brookline, MA) and has served as Visiting Lecturer and University Chorus Director at Brown University, and as Director-at-Large for the Association of Anglican Musicians.

Bass-baritone and composer **Nathan Halbur**'s eclectic career has included performing semi-improvised opera with Esperanza Spalding in the world premiere of *Wayne Shorter's* ...(*Iphigenia*); providing the voice of Dr. Seuss's Grinch for the Boston Pops; singing (in solo and ensemble capacities) with Emmanuel Music, Boston Baroque, and Ensemble Altera; and leading pioneering work in the field of vocal ensemble free-improvisation with Nightingale Vocal Ensemble. He previously appeared with Skylark on the programs *Sub Rosa* and *Clear Voices in the Dark*. His band DREAMGLOW reimagines music of the classical canon in an electronic lo-fi aesthetic, and he loves hiking and rollerskating.

23 Subscription24 Season

www.skylarkensemble.org



Skylark's new signature storytelling concert.

Thursday, March 14, 2024 | 7PM Falmouth Academy, Falmouth MA

Friday, March 15, 2024 | 7PM Church of the Redeemer, Chestnut Hill MA

Saturday, March 16, 2024 | 3PM St. Paul's Episcopal, Newburyport MA

Sunday, March 17, 2024 | 4PM Bedford Presbyterian Church, Bedford NY



A reflection on unconditional love.

Thursday, May 2, 2024 | TBD Location TBD, New York City, NY Friday, May 3, 2024 | 7PM St. Paul's Episcopal, Newburyport MA Saturday, May 4, 2024 | 3PM Church of the Redeemer, Chestnut Hill MA Sunday, May 5, 2024 | 2PM John Wesley UMC, Falmouth MA

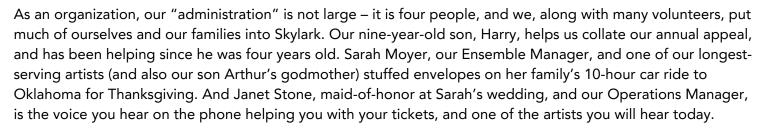


Support Skylark's Future

Dear Friends,

As we reflect this year on what makes Skylark as an organization unique, we keep coming back to community and connection. We all crave connection and a sense of community and belonging – what we have found with Skylark is a way to create that connection through music and through deep relationships with our audiences in the communities we serve.

Through homestays we forge deep relationships with our audiences – many of our regular hosts ask for "their" specific Skylarks to stay with them time and again. Our audience members have knitted baby blankets for our children, cooked meals for us, and attended our artists' many other concerts outside of Skylark.



We will continue to invest our time in Skylark, and our artists will continue to amaze us with the emotional connections of making music together. We have achieved this through the dedication of our artists to their craft, through your willingness to bring our artists into your lives, and thanks to your generous financial support.

Thank you for so graciously considering Skylark in your annual giving.

Your support helps us soar to new artistic heights!

- We are the first American choir to record Francis Poulenc's Figure Humaine for commercial release. We will release this album on Memorial Day Weekend 2024, just prior to the 80th anniversary of D-Day.
- ➤ We are the only American choir invited to VOCES8's LIVE from London virtual concert series, which runs from Dec 4 Jan 7 presenting our virtual performance of Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol.
- This season Skylark will present a **new** storytelling program in March, and a **new** commission from jazz pianist Dan Tepfer in May, tracing unconditional love between parents and children.
- In 2024, we will be bringing our signature programming to **two exciting new venues** for Skylark the **Hispanic Society Museum and Library** in New York and the **MET Cloisters** (stay tuned for more details).

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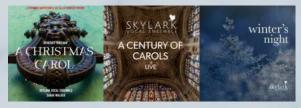
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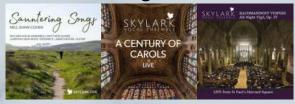
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